

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5438

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 19, 2007

Title: An act relating to after-school care programs.

Brief Description: Creating the Washington community learning center program.

Sponsors: Senators Eide, Rockefeller, Kohl-Welles, Keiser, Rasmussen, Pridemore, Shin, McAuliffe and Benton.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/05/07, 2/19/07 [DP-WM, w/oRec].

Ways & Means: 2/26/07.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Tom, Vice Chair; Holmquist, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Clements, Eide, Hewitt, Hobbs, Kauffman, Oemig, Rasmussen and Weinstein.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Zarelli.

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Bryon Moore (786-7726)

Background: The federal 21st-Century Community Learning Centers program supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The program helps students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children. Formula grants are awarded to state educational agencies, such as the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), which in turn manage statewide competitions and award grants to eligible entries.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Under current Washington law, school boards have the authority to establish before-and-after school care. The boards must establish courses, activities, rules, and regulations governing such care, provided they meet the minimum standards set by the U.S. Department of Health and Washington's OSPI. The boards may fix a reasonable fee for the care and may supplement the funds received. The boards may use funds for before-and-after school care to transport children to a child care program using district-owned school buses and other vehicles, or by contracting for such services.

Summary of Bill: The Washington Community Learning Center program is established. The program will be administered by OSPI. The program has four purposes, one of which is the support or expansion of community learning centers that provide students with after-school tutoring and educational enrichment. Other purposes include training and professional development for community learning staff, increasing public awareness of the availability and benefits of after-school programs, and supporting statewide after-school intermediary organizations.

To the extent that funding is available, OSPI may provide grants to organizations that meet the eligibility criteria of the federal 21st-Century Community Learning Centers program. A priority may be given to requests that are submitted jointly by school districts with nonschool partners.

A priority will be given to grant requests that focus on improving the reading and mathematics skills of students in Title I schools that have been identified as being in need of improvement, and that include a public-private partnership agreement or proposal for providing free transportation for students in the program. The grants may be used to carry out a broad array of activities that support and enhance academic achievement.

Each grant may be made for a maximum of five years. The grant recipients must annually report to OSPI on the transportation services used for students in the program. OSPI will compile a list of transportation options. School districts that receive a grant may seek approval from OSPI to use their state transportation funds for transporting students to and from the Community Learning Center Program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on August 1, 2007.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: While many good after-school programs exist, there is a significant need to accommodate more youth. After-school programs help personalize education and enable students to do homework without distractions, get tutoring, and participate in enrichment activities. Teacher training is critical because these programs provide emotional, social, and academic support for students. The biggest barrier to getting youth into after school programs is transportation; thus, free transportation is a key piece of this bill. Creating school-community partnerships will help sustain the programs even if funding goes away.

Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: Senator Eide, prime sponsor; Helen Myrick, Stephanie Burbach, Ria Johnson, Greater Pierce County Community Network; Janet Frieling, Joan Yoshitomi, School's Out Washington/Washington Afterschool Network; Jessica Hayden, student; Susan Brown, Kids Co.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): PRO: This bill is about providing a public/private partnership to support after-school programs in the state. The cost-benefits of after-school programs are quite significant. This is about serving additional kids and expanding opportunities. The needs of transportation are addressed in this legislation.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Senator Eide, prime sponsor; Danielle Baer, School's Out Washington; Sarah Cherin, Children's Alliance; Don Pierce, Washington State Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.